

Agricultural Commission Meeting Minutes
February 8th, 2011
Town Hall

Members Present: Jaime Wagner, Ruth Hazzard, Wm Levine, John Thibbits, Jeremy Barker-Plotkin, Pat Wagner, and Joe Swartz.

Non-members Present: John Gerber, Bernard Brennan

Members Absent: Sally Fitz, Touria Eaton

Minutes: November meeting minutes will be reviewed at the March meeting
January minutes were reviewed and approved with some changes.

Hawkers and Peddlers: A letter was given to the Agricultural Commission saying that hawkers and peddlers of Ag products are exempt from the state laws regarding hawkers and peddlers; a copy of the towns "Facts for Hawkens and Peddlers" was handed out, outlining the rules.

Public Forum – Future of Farming in Amherst: John Gerber gave a presentation on a meeting that is going to take place on March 31, 2001 from 7-9 PM with the Agricultural Commission co-sponsoring the event with the Conservation Commission. The presentation will be about more food production in Amherst. Wm, Jeremy and Joe thought that they would like to help John with this event. Dr. Brian Donahue will be speaking about his experiences creating opportunities for people to farm on public land.

Spring Warrant: Revisions to the poultry and livestock bylaw were presented, along with information regarding the two citizen warrant article petitions that were submitted for consideration for the spring town meeting. The ag-com voted unanimously to support/endorse the information given to us.

Farmer Forum: The farmer forum will be held at Small ones farm, on 3/16/2011 from 9:30-11, the agenda will include subcommittee reports as well as a summery of the meeting being held on 3/31. There will be French toast, eggs, bacon, sausage and coffee, a collection bucket will be passed at the meeting in hopes of covering some of the cost, an invitation will be created and town hall will mail it out to the farmers on their list.

MAAC Membership: Jaime has sent in her application to be a Hampshire county representative on the board, Ruth is going to look into having the Amherst Agricultural Commission become a member. There is a conference being held in Deerfield on 3/5.

Right to Farm Bylaw: Diana is supposed to be following through to see if the town has taken action on getting realtors in town the information they need to make available to potential buyers, and if not we need to figure out how this can be done.

Subcommittee Reports:

Communication: The second newsletter is going out and a new facebook page has been created, John and Jaime are working hard on these two items, in an effort to help get the agcom into the public eye so we can better let people know what we are working on.

Education: No Report given

Farmers Market: EBT machines should be up and running at the middle school market soon, they will also accept debit and credit cards, and soon after it is in place here it should be running at the North Amherst Farmers Market too.

John Spinetti spoke with John Musante, there has been no formal meeting set, things have settled down a bit, and there should only be about four weeks of disruption due to construction, and the market is going to try to deal with the uneven surfaces. The agcom would like to host a meeting with the market people to help with any issues that may come up, not only with the construction but also with making the market more accessible to new vendors. The Farmers Market subcommittee is going to look further in to this.

Preservation: Nothing new to report.

Meeting adjourned 9:18 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Jaime Wagner